

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are at issue. No claims have been allowed.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended by the Examiner during the telephone interview conducted on June 25, 2003. In the interview, Applicant's attorney discussed calling for a "hard" molded plastic tubular coupling and pointed out the distinction of the proposed claim over Bertling et al., U.S. Patent No. 3,269,754.

Applicant's specification, column 4, line 2, describes sleeve 11 as being a hard molded plastic sleeve 11. Page 4, lines 13 and 14, describes the use of an annular flexible diaphragm 20.

Bertling et al. describe in column 1, line 24, that they provide a **resilient** internal coupling. In line 30 of column 1, Bertling et al. explain that their coupling is expanded outwardly into intimate compressive contact with the inside surface of a conduit. This teaches that the coupling is compressible, i.e., is not hard. Furthermore, in column 2, lines 19-24, Bertling et al. also state that the conduit (coupling) will be compressed radially inwardly and that the distal edge 22 will be expanded radially outwardly and will thereby be forced into intimate compressive contact with the interior surface of the conduit 20. Further, in claim 1, Bertling et al. call for a coupling formed of a single piece of **resilient** plastic material.

Clearly Bertling et al. envisioned a resilient compressible coupling, unlike the hard molded plastic sleeve coupling which Applicant has provided. In Bertling et al., the annular serrations 28, as pointed out in column 2, lines 5-8, **enhance** the coupling engagement with the interior surface of conduit 20. In other words, Bertling et al. provide a resilient compressible coupling whose outer surface includes ridges 26. At the top of one of the ridges 26, serrations 28 are formed. All the ridges of the coupling of Bertling et al. are in intimate contact with the interior surface of conduit 20, not just serrations 28.

As distinguished therefrom, Applicant has provided a hard molded plastic sleeve which is not either resilient or compressible. Rather, the sleeve slides smoothly into a conduit and sealing is achieved by the annular flexible diaphragm 20 which is seated in recess 19.

Applicant incorporates herein all comments made in the response filed March 11, 2003.

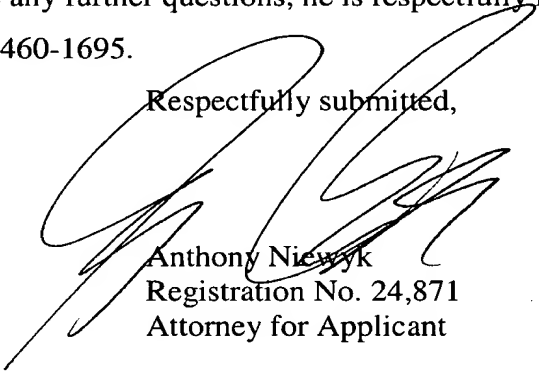
Application No. 09/767,514
Amendment dated July 8, 2003
Reply to Office Action dated May 8, 2003

Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests allowance thereof.

In the event Applicant has overlooked the need for an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicant hereby petitions therefore and authorizes that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 02-0385, Baker & Daniels.

Should the Examiner have any further questions, he is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned at 260-460-1695.

Respectfully submitted,



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